1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

smallish and in colouring resembles a brown leghorn with large sweeping tail-feathers; the hen is a neat little white or brown bird. The wings are well developed and the native fowl is often capable of flying to the top of a coco-nut palm. It is kept for eating or for its feathers; natives do not appear to fancy the eggs greatly. The cock is treasured principally on account of his long tail-feathers, which are shamelessly plucked; though natives realize that a European has queer notions regarding cruelty to dumb creatures, and more than once, inquiring about a tailless rooster, I have been assured that its feathers were torn out by a dog.

Preparation of Food

Fire-making. The indigenous method of fire-making is that of the stick and groove. From their mountain neighbours on the south the Orokaiva have learnt in recent times the saw method, with split stick and rattan. This is said to be more effective, but is not as yet very widely known.

The stick and groove method is called *kaja*, i.e. 'thrust', as, e.g., with a spear. The smaller stick is called *bi-kai* (*bi* = penis; *kai* is the root of *kaiari* or *kajari* = thrust). A shaving is peeled back on the piece of wood which acts as base. The *bi-kai* is grasped in both hands, knuckles up and thumbs down, and worked back and forth with increasing speed, till it is suddenly brought to a stop pressing into the end of the groove, where a little pile of smoking wood-dust has accumulated. If this is smouldering it is gently coaxed and blown and then transferred to a coco-nut husk. Although signed-on boys bring back matches to the villages, it is by no means to be imagined that the primitive method of fire-making has gone out of use.

Cooking. There is but one regular meal in the Orokaiva day, viz. in the evening. The housewife peels her taro and cuts it into lumps with a sharp oyster-shell or a keen-edged piece of coco-nut shell. She adds various leaves and herbs for flavouring, among the commonest being that of the taro itself, first carefully freed from its stalk and ribs. She may spray condiments out of her mouth into the pot, and finally covers it with leaves and allows it to seethe. From the

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

earthenware pot (*obu*) the cooked taro is transferred to smaller pots, wooden bowls (*teva*), or coco-nut shells, in which it is served.

Food is placed in front of the principal people present, and the others soon group themselves round the various dishes. There is none but a tacit invitation, simply a jerk of the head. The meal goes on for the most part in silence—that is, in respect of conversation, though not always in respect of mastication and swallowing. The only table utensils are coco-nut spoons (*age*), in the form of little boat-shaped scoops, and three- or four-pronged forks (*sagi*) made of bone or wood. The latter, however, are said to be old men's implements. It was suggested that they were needed because of the clumsiness of an old man's fingers, but the fact is that there is something honorific about them. A young man would not feel at home with a *sagi*; he would be, in a manner, exceeding his rights.

Nearly all Orokaiva cooking is done in earthenware pots. They are even carried on expeditions. But on emergency there is the method of cooking with hot stones. The food is placed on a layer of leaves upon the hot stones; more leaves and more hot stones are laid on top, and the food slowly bakes. The method of cooking in a pit, with heated stones below and above is known, but I have never seen it put into practice. It is alluded to in some of the legends and is presumably an old fashion. The boiling of water by heated stones is used in fumigation. The medicines are placed together with water in a wooden dish (*teva*), and when the heated stones are thrown in, the steam rises and the sick man stoops over it to be fumigated.

Salt. The native shows the usual craving for salt, so that among the inlanders it is useful pay for carriers. Visiting the coast, these inlanders will even take calabashes and bring them home full of sea-water. The only means of obtaining it locally is by burning certain leaves and the husks of coco-nut or *Tauga* nuts. Over a layer of dry wood are set a number of large pottery fragments, and over these again are piled the leaves and husks. Ignited, the pile smokes abundantly, and when it has burnt away leaves a residue of

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

ash in the pottery fragments. For actual use the ash, which has a salty taste, is placed in a half coco-nut shell and watered; and the salty water percolates through the eye-hole of the coco-nut into the cooking-pot.

Stimulants

The habit of betel-chewing is universal among men, women, and even young children. There can be no question that betel, a mild and comparatively harmless stimulant, does much to make the native's life pleasanter, especially by reason of the good-fellowship which is the best argument for all intoxicants. Areca or betel palms grow in every village. The betel pepper (*Piper betle*) called *Hingi* grows wild in the bush and is transplanted into villages and gardens. A superior cultivated kind is called *Hingi petani*. Legends of the origin or discovery of the areca palm and the betel pepper have been recounted elsewhere.[1]

Lime (*O-nasal*) is made by burning shell-fish from the sea or rivers. A small tower or pyre about 3 feet square and 3 feet 6 inches high is made of layers of dry sago branches laid criss-cross, and on each layer are set a number of shells. The pyre is lit from above in order to prevent premature collapse. It burns and cools rapidly, 'like paper'. The shells, which retain their shape, are transferred by improvised tongs to a sheet of banana leaf, which by being passed once or twice through the flames has become pliable. The shells are gently kneaded with mutterings of *ere ere!* 'Get up, hurry up!', which are meant to expedite the pulverizing process, and are cautiously sprinkled with water. Then the banana leaf is folded and left by a fire, presumably to hasten the slaking. If all this has been done carefully, the result will be a very fine soft powder.

The lime-pot (*O-kigi*) is a calabash with a stopper of closely woven strands of creeper. A somewhat more pretentious lime-pot, called *kananga*, is furnished with a shell mouthpiece set in black native beeswax, and encrusted with gems of scarlet seed and white shell fragments. The spatula (*O-ta*) is commonly of black wood. The point is thrust into

[1] *Orokaiva Magic*, p. 123.